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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 06-01-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Jammu is to be the 69th Railway Division of the Indian Railway

The Union Ministry of Railways will set up its 69 railway division at Jammu under the Northern Railway Zone.

This was intimated to the Northern Zone by the ministry in its official communication issued by the ministry on 1st January 2025 as reported by Akashvani (formerly All India Radio).

Currently, the Indian Railways has 68 divisions and when the notification is issued by the Indian Railways, Jammu will be the 69th division of the Indian Railways.

India has the fourth largest rail network in the world after the United States of America, China, and Russia.

However, the Indian railway is the world's largest railway system under single management and the largest employer with around 1.25 million employees.

The Jammu Division will be under the Northern Railway Zone. It will be formed by reorganising the existing Firzorpur division and it will manage the 742.1 km network.

The proposed Jammu division will include five sections: Pathankot-Jammu-Udhampur (now martyr Captain Tushar Mahajan), Srinagar-Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal-Pathankot, Batala (excluding)-Pathankot, and Pathankot-Joginder Nagar.

Uttarakhand Forest Department Establishes Ethnobotanical Garden in Haldwani

The Uttarakhand Forest Department has developed an ethnobotanical garden, named "Mahabharata Vatika", in Haldwani, spread over one acre of land.

The garden showcases 37 plant species mentioned in 18 sections of the Mahabharata, emphasizing its ecological and environmental knowledge.

The epic contains hymns on the importance of planting trees, creating water bodies, and protecting tigers, reflecting ancient environmental awareness.

In addition to the "Mahabharata Vatika," the forest department has also set up a "Ramayana Vatika" in Haldwani, focusing on plant species mentioned in the Ramayana.

Chief Conservator of Forests, Sanjeev Chaturvedi, is overseeing these initiatives to blend environmental education with cultural heritage.

Chhattisgarh Introduces Innovative Plan Linking Forest Ecosystem Services

Chhattisgarh has introduced a plan that connects the ecosystem services provided by its forests to the Green Gross Domestic Product (Green GDP), marking a first in the state.

The initiative aims to highlight the direct link between the environmental contributions of forests (clean air, water conservation, biodiversity) and the state's economic progress.

44% of Chhattisgarh's land is covered by forests, making its natural resources vital to the livelihoods of millions.

Forest products like tendu leaves, lac, honey, and medicinal plants significantly contribute to the rural economy.

Chhattisgarh's forests play a crucial role in mitigating climate change by absorbing carbon.

Uttarakhand Government Signs MoU with ITBP

Uttarakhand government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to promote tourism in the border areas of the state.

This agreement allows the use of ITBP’s helipads for tourism-related activities, enhancing accessibility to otherwise hard-to-reach locations.

The agreement was signed by officials from the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and ITBP.

The initiative will expand heli-services to border areas where tourist destinations, such as Adi Kailash, Om Parvat, and Timmarsain Mahadev, are located.

These religious sites, situated in the Uttarakhand border, have inaccessible roads, making heli-services crucial for attracting tourists.

The partnership aims to not only boost tourism but also generate substantial revenue from the sale of local products and services to ITBP battalions.

This initiative is expected to generate annual turnover exceeding ₹200 crore by facilitating local businesses and products.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's Wishlist Includes

BrahMos Missiles

The purchase of BrahMos missiles is a key item on the agenda for Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto during his proposed visit to India for the Republic Day celebrations later this month.

Indonesia could become the third country from Southeast Asia to purchase the BrahMos missile system, following the Philippines and Vietnam.

During his visit to India as Defence Minister in 2020, BrahMos was a significant topic of discussion in his meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Indonesia will send nearly 400 military personnel to participate in the Republic Day parade on January 26, marking the highest number of personnel from any guest country in recent years.

This will be the fourth time an Indonesian president will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations.

Previous instances include Joko Widodo's presence in 2018, where all ASEAN leaders attended to celebrate 25 years of India-ASEAN dialogue partnership.

Prabowo Subianto, a strong proponent of India-Indonesia ties, is also interested in adopting India's digital initiatives, the mid-day meal scheme for schools, and providing milk to students.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Tata Elxsi Partners with Qualcomm Technologies

Tata Elxsi has announced collaboration with Qualcomm Technologies, Inc. to develop virtual models of Snapdragon Digital Chassis solutions for cloud-native application development aimed at accelerating the adoption of Software-Defined Vehicles (SDV) in next-gen mobility.

The collaboration will be demonstrated at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2025, where Tata Elxsi will showcase the development of a virtual electronic control unit (ECU) platform.

The platform will utilize Snapdragon virtual system-on-chips (VSoCs) and target automakers and Tier-1 suppliers in the passenger, commercial, and off-highway vehicle segments.

The initiative will use Snapdragon Digital Chassis VSoCs to revolutionize the SDV development process, particularly in R&D teams.

It will reduce dependency on hardware availability, speeding up software development and validation, thus shortening product development lifecycles.

At CES 2025, Tata Elxsi will integrate its AVENIR SDV suite with Snapdragon Ride Flex SoC to demonstrate real-world use cases.

This will include mixed-critical workloads for infotainment and advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS).

IIT Madras collaborates with Ministry of Agriculture

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has announced collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on Project VISTAAR (Virtually Integrated System to Access Agricultural Resources).

The initiative aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the agricultural extension system through digitalisation.

This will help farmers and other stakeholders access the capabilities and offerings of these start-ups more easily.

The startup information platform developed by the Centre for Research on Startups and Risk Financing at IIT Madras, along with its incubated startup YNOS Venture Engine, contains details on over 12,000 start-ups in the agriculture and farming sectors.

This collaboration will make this rich information easily accessible to farmers and significantly enhance the effectiveness of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers.

BANKING

State Bank Of India Introduces Two New Deposit Schemes

State Bank of India (SBI) has launched two new deposit schemes Har Ghar Lakhpati" and "Patrons.

Har Ghar Lakhpati Scheme:

Type: Pre-calculated Recurring Deposit.

Objective: Accumulate a sum of ₹1 lakh or its multiple.

Target: Simplifies achieving financial goals by helping customers plan and save effectively.

Eligibility: Available to minors, encouraging early financial planning and saving habits.

Tenure: Minimum tenure is 12 months (1 year); maximum tenure is 120 months (10 years).

Patrons Scheme:

Type: Term Deposit product.

Target Audience: Senior citizens aged 80 years or above.

Interest Rates: Offers enhanced interest rates compared to regular fixed deposits.

Eligibility: Available to both new and existing term deposit customers.

Fixed Deposit Rates:

For tenures above 1 year: 6.80% interest rate.

For tenures above 2 years: 7.00% interest rate.

For tenures above 3 years to less than 5 years: 6.75% interest rate.

For tenures 5-10 years: 6.50% interest rate.

Bharat Connect Set to Launch By March, Marking A UPI Milestone For B2B Payments

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is expected to roll out its Bharat BillPay for Business offering by March

Bharat Connect, formerly known as Bharat BillPay, will allow businesses to manage B2B payments, operating on a model similar to NPCI's partnerships with third-party application providers (TPAPs).

The new Bharat BillPay for Business offering will authorize companies to facilitate B2B payments using a real-time payments system similar to how TPAPs enable P2P and P2M transactions on UPI.

The platform's setup for businesses will resemble the model NPCI uses with TPAPs, which typically cater to peer-to-peer (P2P) and peer-to-merchant (P2M) transactions.

MISCELLANEOUS

President Droupadi Murmu Praises NIMHANS

During the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru, Karnataka, President Droupadi Murmu lauded the institution for its innovative approach to integrating Yoga and Ayurveda into the treatment of mental health.

President Murmu praised NIMHANS for its integrative medicine services, emphasizing how combining modern healthcare systems with traditional methods such as Yoga and Ayurveda has proven effective in addressing both mental and physical distress.

She described NIMHANS' approach as a model for others, particularly in the treatment of psychiatric and neurological disorders.

President Murmu inaugurated key facilities, including the Psychiatry Specialty Block, Central Laboratory Complex, and Bhima Hostel.

She also dedicated advanced diagnostic equipment, such as the 3T MRI Scanner and DSA System, to the nation.

Tele-MANAS, a telemedicine service providing mental health counseling across India, and the SAMVAD platform, which addresses mental health concerns for both children and adults, were also lauded for their contributions to improving access to mental health services